

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 NIC-01 /057 W
----- 089898

R 171700Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8695

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 17451

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, VT, PL

SUBJECT: VATICAN-POLISH RELATIONS AND DESTRUCTION OF POLISH CHAPEL

REF: A) WARSAW 7244; B) ROME 16752 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING OFFICIAL OPENING OF SZABLEWSKI MISSION DEC. 16, IT APPARENT THAT GOP HOPES TO USE THIS AS MAIN CHANNEL FOR DISCUSSING CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AT EXPENSE OF POLISH HIERARCHY. VATICAN, HOWEVER, CONFIDENT THAT GOP FULLY CONVINCED OF VATICAN'S DETERMINATION TO KEEP POLISH BISHOPS FULLY INVOLVED. INITIAL BIG PROBLEM, AND ONE WHICH PERMITS GOP DEMONSTRATE GOOD WILL, WILL BE NAMING OF BISHOPS TO VACANT DIOCESES. VATICAN ANTICIPATES GOP FOOT-DRAGGING UNTIL NEW MODALITY FOR CHOOSING BISHOPS WORKED OUT. END SUMMARY.

1. VATICAN'S DESK OFFICER FOR POLAND INFORMED US THAT MINISTER SZABLEWSKI MADE HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AT VATICAN DEC. 16 WHEN HE PRESENTED HIS "LETTER OF INTRODUCTION" TO CARDINAL SECRETARY OF STATE VILLOT AND LATER MET WITH ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI, VATICAN "FORMIN". SOURCE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED DETAILS OF ABOVE TWO CONVERSATIONS, BUT CERTAIN THAT CASAROLI HAD SOUGHT EXPLANATION FOR DESTRUCTION OF CATHOLIC CHAPEL IN WARSAW.

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2. SOURCE WAS MOST GRATEFUL FOR INFORMATION WE PROVIDED HIM FROM REFTEL A, ESPECIALLY SINCE VATICAN HAD PREVIOUSLY ONLY RECEIVED TEXT OF CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI'S ANNOUNCEMENT. DESK OFFICER NOTED THAT WHEN HE QUERIED POLISH EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY KUBAT DEC. 3 ABOUT INCIDENT, KUBAT REPLIED THAT HE HAD AN OFFICIAL REPORT BUT CLAIMED THAT NEWS STORIES OF CHAPEL DESTRUCTION HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY HIM AND COLLEAGUES AT EMBASSY WITH "CONSIDERABLE EMBARRASSMENT AND SURPRISE." KUBAT, WHO NOW VISITING WARSAW, PROMISED TO GET VATICAN AN OFFICIAL EXPLANATION.

3. IT HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED WHAT ISSUES WILL BE DISCUSSED INITIALLY WITH SZABLEWSKI'S MISSION, BUT VATICAN WELL AWARE THAT GOP HOPING TO USE THIS OFFICE AS MAIN CHANNEL FOR DEALING WITH CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS TO EXCLUSION OF LOCAL HIERARCHY. ON OTHER HAND, VATICAN HAS MADE EVERY EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT ROME HAS NO INTENTION OF EXCLUDING POLISH BISHOPS OR DEALING OVER THEIR HEADS WITH GOVERNMENT, AND VATICAN FEELS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THIS MESSAGE IS GETTING THROUGH TO GOP.

4. FIRST MAJOR TASK IS QUESTION OF FILLING VACANT POLISH DIOCESES. SINCE UNILATERAL POLISH ABROGATION OF CONCORDAT IN 1953, POLISH BISHOPS HAVE BEEN CHOSEN ON BASIS OF AN INFORMAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOP AND POLISH HIERARCHY WHICH PERMITS CARDINAL PRIMATE TO PRESENT HIERARCHY'S CANDIDATES TO GOP FOR PRIOR APPROVAL AND, FOLLOWING THIS, SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES ARE PRESENTED TO HOLY SEE FOR FINAL ACTION. HOLY SEE HAS OVER YEARS ONLY TAKEN COGNIZANCE OF THIS AGREEMENT BUT HAS NEVER APPROVED IT IN SUBSTANCE. IMPRESSION IN VATICAN TODAY IS THAT, GIVEN EXISTENCE OF SZABLEWSKI MISSION, GOP DOES NOT WISH TO CONTINUE THIS PRACTICE OF WORKING WITH POLISH HIERARCHY, BUT WOULD PREFER TO DISCUSS NOMINATIONS EXCLUSIVELY AND DIRECTLY WITH VATICAN. IT IS VATICAN'S BELIEF THAT GOP WILL CONTINUE TO TEMPERIZE ON REPLACEMENT OF CARDINAL KOMINEK UNTIL THIS ISSUE RESOLVED, ALTHOUGH THERE IS POSSIBILITY THAT AS GOOD WILL GESTURE THEY MAY PERMIT FILLING OF AT LEAST WROCLAW UNDER OLD FORMULA. VATICAN IS NOT WILLING TO EXCLUDE POLISH HIERARCHY FROM ROLE IN CHOOSING BISHOPS. INCIDENTALLY, SOURCE AVERRED THAT VATICAN HAS NOT PARTICIPATED IN LATEST EFFORTS TO REPLACE CARDINAL KOMINEK AS CANDIDATES HAVE NEVER GOTTEN BEYOND POINT OF BEING DISCUSSED BETWEEN POLISH HIERARCHY AND GOP.

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5. ARCHBISHOP POGGI, SZABLEWSKI'S COUNTERPART, NOT EXPECTED TO MAKE HIS FIRST VISIT TO POLAND UNTIL FEBRUARY, AND SOURCE SAID IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE UNTIL THEN TO GET ANY CLEAR IDEA OF HOW BISHOPS WILL BE CHOSEN HENCEFORTH.

6. SOURCE CONFIRMED THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DEFINITE CHILL IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN POLAND. HE REPEATED THEME REPORTED IN

REFTEL B THAT PART OF THE TROUBLE PROBABLY STEMS FROM LEFT-WING PARTY ELEMENTS WHO ARE DEEPLY DISTURBED OVER LAST SUMMER'S WARM-UP, ESPECIALLY OPENING OF SZABLEWSKI MISSION, AND WHO HOPING TO EMBARRASS PARTY LEADERSHIP BY CREATING CERTAIN INCIDENTS, MAINLY AT LOCAL LEVEL. SOURCE THOUGHT THAT CHURCH DESTRUCTION MAY HAVE BEEN TRIGGERED BY SUCH ELEMENTS. WHEN ASKED WHY HE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AS WHOLE WOULD TOLERATE SUCH ABERRANT BEHAVIOR, HE SAID THAT NEED TO PRESENT UNIFIED PARTY FRONT FORCED LEADERSHIP TO COVER UP FOR EXTREMISTS RATHER THAN DISOWN THEM. ADDITIONALLY, ANTI-SOVIET ELEMENTS IN PARTY, HE THOUGHT, WISHED TO EMBARRASS PRO-SOVIET MAJORITY AND CAUSING DIFFICULTIES WITH CHURCH WAS NATURAL WAY TO DO THIS.

7. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, VATICAN HAS RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT SOVIETS RATHER DISPLEASED OVER POLISH HASTE IN OPENING INFORMAL RELATIONS WITH VATICAN AND DEFINITELY WOULD HAVE DISAPPROVED HAD THEIR VIEWS BEEN SOLICITED. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHURCH STATE RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PLACES OF WORSHIP
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ROME17451
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740367-0338
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741229/aaaaayit.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 74 WARSAW 7244, 74 ROME 16752
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAY 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <24 MAR 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VATICAN-POLISH RELATIONS AND DESTRUCTION OF POLISH CHAPEL
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, VT, PL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005